

Senate Resolution 294

By: Senators Thomas of the 54th, Hill of the 32nd, Heath of the 31st, Hudgens of the 47th, Kemp of the 46th and others

**ADOPTED**

**A RESOLUTION**

Creating the Cervical Cancer Elimination Task Force; and for other purposes.

WHEREAS, following breast cancer, cervical cancer is the second most common cancer in women worldwide; and

WHEREAS, according to federal governmental statistics, cervical cancer is the third most common gynecological cancer among American women, with approximately 12,200 new cases diagnosed annually, 4,100 of which result in fatalities; and

WHEREAS, with regular and accurate screening, cervical cancer is highly preventable; widespread screening programs have helped to reduce death rates of women from cervical cancer, but women are still dying even with such advanced medical techniques and evaluative procedures; and

WHEREAS, cervical cancer cases in the United States are generally attributed to a lack of education, a reduction of access available to regular cervical cancer screening, and a lack of screening accuracy; and

WHEREAS, experience shows that increasing cervical cancer awareness among women, especially the underserved women within our state, significantly reduces the probability of mortality; and

WHEREAS, cervical cancer disproportionately affects minority women and women with lower incomes because they are less likely to have access to routine screening; and

WHEREAS, approximately half of all cervical cancer cases are in women who have never been screened, and 10 percent of cases are in women who have not been screened within the last five years; and

WHEREAS, the median age of cervical cancer patients at diagnosis is 47 years, the youngest median age for all female reproductive cancers; and

WHEREAS, new screening technologies, including FDA-approved testing for human papillomavirus, which is the cause of virtually all cervical cancers, offer new opportunities to finally eliminate this potentially deadly disease through early identification of women at increased risk; and

WHEREAS, leading medical organizations, including the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, the American Cancer Society, and the Association of Reproductive Health Professionals, have recently updated their screening guidelines to include FDA-approved testing for the human papillomavirus; and

WHEREAS, women are entitled to proper cervical cancer information, so that they can be empowered to make informed health care decisions, and access to routine screening, including the most accurate methods available; and

WHEREAS, the members of this body recognize that through education and screening, women can lower their likelihood for developing cervical cancer, and that through early detection cervical cancer can be successfully treated after it develops.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

#### **SECTION 1.**

Effective July 1, 2005, the Cervical Cancer Elimination Task Force is established for the purpose of reviewing data regarding cervical cancer and human papillomavirus of women and recommending strategies and actions to reduce the costs and burden of cervical cancer in Georgia.

#### **SECTION 2.**

(a) The task force shall be composed of nine members to be appointed as follows:

(1) The Director of the Division of Public Health of the Department of Human Resources or another representative, appointed by the Governor;

- (2) The Director of the Georgia Cancer Coalition or another representative, appointed by the Governor;
  - (3) A board-certified, practicing gynecologist representing the Georgia Obstetric and Gynecologic Society, appointed by the Governor;
  - (4) A board-certified oncologist, specializing in gynecological disorders, appointed by the Governor;
  - (5) A representative from Georgia State University's Georgia Health Policy Center, appointed by the Governor;
  - (6) Two members of the Georgia House of Representatives, appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives; and
  - (7) Two members of the Georgia Senate, appointed by the President Pro Tempore of the Senate.
- (b) The Governor shall designate a member to serve as chairperson of the task force. The task force shall meet at the call of the chairperson.
- (c) Members of the task force shall serve without compensation.

### **SECTION 3.**

The task force shall:

- (1) Review statistical and qualitative data regarding cervical cancer and human papillomavirus of women and the prevalence and burden of cervical cancer;
- (2) Receive and consider reports and testimony from individuals, county health departments, community-based organizations, and other public and private organizations state wide to learn more about their contributions to cervical cancer diagnosis, prevention, and treatment, as well as their ideas for improving the care of cervical cancer patients in this state;
- (3) Identify priority strategies and new technologies, including newly introduced vaccines, which are effective in preventing and controlling the risk of cervical cancer;
- (4) Provide recommendations to the Division of Public Health of the Georgia Department of Human Resources on public awareness issues relating to cervical cancer, such as the causes, personal risk factors, value of prevention, methods of prevention and treatment, early detection options, treatment costs, new technology, and education for health care practitioners;
- (5) Identify and examine existing programs, services, laws, and rules regarding the availability and coverage of treatment services for cervical cancer and current methods

used to provide women with information regarding cervical cancer, access to regular screening, and options for increasing screening accuracy; and

(6) Develop a comprehensive Cervical Cancer Prevention Plan and present recommendations to the Governor, the Director of the Georgia Cancer Coalition, the Commissioner of the Georgia Department of Human Resources, the Commissioner of the Georgia Department of Community Health, the President Pro Tempore of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

#### **SECTION 4.**

The task force shall present an interim report to: the Governor, the Director of the Georgia Cancer Coalition, the Commissioner of the Georgia Department of Human Resources, the Commissioner of the Georgia Department of Community Health, the President Pro Tempore of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives by January 1 , 2006, with a final report due on June 30, 2006. The task force shall stand abolished on June 30, 2006.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Secretary of the Senate is authorized and directed to transmit appropriate copies of this resolution to the public and the press.